

Message Text

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ACTION EB-06

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7571

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BANGKOK 16386

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EWWT, BTRA, XC

SUBJECT: SHIPPING: CENTRAL GULF'S "FLASH" SYSTEM (INTEREST
OF SENATOR LONG)

REF: A. BANGKOK 15251 9-28-73; B. STATE 184360; C. BANGKOK
13933, D. JAKARTA 11029

1. IN LATE AUGUST EMBOFF ACCOMPANIED HUGO HANSEN, VP OF
CENTRAL GULF, IN CALL ON DEPUTY TO UNDER SECRETARY OF
COMMUNICATONS (M.L. JEONGJAN KAMBHU) PER REF B. MR. HANSEN
EXPLAINED CENTRAL GULF'S INTEREST IN SERVING BANGKOK BY
MEANS OF MOTHER SHIPS WHICH WOULD PROCEED ONLY AS FAR AS
VUNG TAO (PORT FOR SAIGON) OR SINGAPORE. OPERATIONALLY,
"LASH" UNTIS BOUND FOR BANGKOK WOULD BE DISCHARGED FROM
THE MOTHER SHIPS INTO THE WATER AT VUNG TAU OR SINGAPORE,
THEN FLOATED INTO A "FEEDER BARGE" (FUNCTIONALLY A FLOATING
DRYDOCK) WHICH WOULD BE TOWED THROUGH GULF OF SIAM FOR
DISCHARGE IN THE CHAO PHYA RIVER IN BANGKOK.

2. M.L. JEONGJAN APPEARED SYMPATHETIC BUT NOTED THAT IN
1973, DESPITE SYMPATHETIC INTEREST OF HIS MINISTRY, THE
PROPOSAL BY PACIFIC FAR EAST LINES TO INITIATE "LASH"
SERVICES TO BANGKOK HAD BEEN FOUND TO BE INCONSISTENT
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WITH THAI NAVIGATION ACT ON THE GROUND SUCH SERVICES CONSTI-

TUTED CABOTAGE. HE ALSO NOTED THAT THAI BARGE AND LIGHTER OWNERS, WHO OPPOSED THE "LASH" PROPOSAL, WOULD IN ALL LIKELIHOOD VIEW INTRODUCTION OF "FLASH" SERVICES AS A NEW THREAT TO THEIR INTERESTS (REF A). HE SAID THAT A PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE NAVIGATION ACT TO PERMIT INTRODUCTION OF "LASH," AND BY EXTENSION "FLASH," OPERATIONS IN BANGKOK IS BEING PROCESSED IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS FOR ULTIMATE PRESENTATION TO THE CABINET, BUT COULD NOT FORECAST TIMING.

3. ON EMBASSY ADVICE, MR. HANSEN CONSULTED A LAWYER IN BANGKOK IN HOPE OF FINDING EITHER A WAIVER PROVISION IN NAVIGATION ACT THAT MIGHT PERMIT INTRODUCTION OF "FLASH" SERVICES ON PROVISIONAL BASIS, AND ALSO THE MEANS TO ASSUAGE FEARS OF BARGE AND LIGHTER OWNERS.

4. ON OCTOBER 3 CENTRAL GULF'S AGENT IN SINGAPORE, MR. MARSHALL, CALLED ON ECON/CML COUNSELOR TO REVIEW DEVELOPMENTS. ON OCTOBER 4 HE MET WITH A LAWYER RETAINED BY MR. HANSEN AND CALLED ON OFFICIALS IN MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS. SUBSEQUENTLY, MR. MARSHALL SAID HE HOPES TO PRESENT TO MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS FORMAL REQUEST FOR WAIVER TO PERMIT CENTRAL GULF TO INAUGURATE "FLASH" SERVICES ON TRIAL BASIS AND THAT HE WOULD SUBMIT ADVANCE COPY TO EMBASSY FOR "VETTING." EMBASSY OFFERED TO MONITOR DEVELOPMENTS AND TO ASSIST AS APPROPRIATE BY KEEPING DESIRABILITY OF THIS SERVICE BEFORE APPROPRAITE RTG OFFICIALS.
MASTERS

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